

DRAWER 13A

Personals

D. Charles Tice
(continued)

71.2007.085.02313

The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Dr. Charles Taft

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

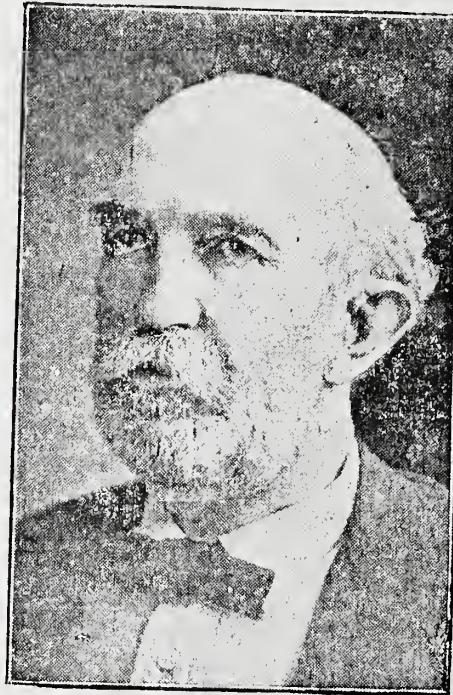
LINCOLN'S LAST HOURS.

DESCRIBED BY DR. C. S. TAFT, WHO WAS
AT PRESIDENT'S BEDSIDE, AND IS
NOW IN FEEBLE HEALTH.

One of the four men who survive of those who were at the deathbed of Abraham Lincoln is himself in feeble health. He is Dr. Charles Sabin Taft, who was then an assistant surgeon in the Army. He probed for the fatal bullet, and stood holding the President's head until the last breath. Dr. Taft is a brother of ex-Secretary of War Alfonso Taft and of Judge Taft.

Dr. Taft is now lying seriously ill with a cancer in the throat at his home, No. 39 South Seventh-ave., Mount Vernon, N. Y. This cancer was not discovered until last April, although he had been ailing from symptoms of it. They were at first believed to be a form of bronchitis.

Dr. Taft is in full possession of all his mental



DR. CHARLES SABIN TAFT.
Now seriously ill, who attended dying President Lincoln.

faculties, and recalls vividly the scenes and incidents connected with the assassination of President Lincoln.

In describing the tragedy for The Tribune, Dr. Taft said:

I had gone to the theatre with my wife to see "Our American Cousin," which was very popular, and we sat in the orchestra, while the President and his immediate party occupied the second tier boxes—two boxes being thrown into one that night—on the right hand looking toward the stage. Our seats were almost directly under the box. The President and Mrs. Lincoln had been laughing heartily at the humorous sallies in the play, and at times would exchange words with Major Rathbone and Miss Harris, who later married Major Rathbone.

THE SCENE IN THE THEATRE.

I shall never forget the scenes of that night in the theatre. Suddenly a pistol shot was heard. It seemed to come from behind the scenes. While it startled everybody, it was supposed to introduce some new scene in the play, the stage being at that time empty and the curtain raised. Then a hatless and white-faced

man was seen climbing over the front of the President's box. As he jumped to the stage, ten feet below, his riding spur caught in the flag which was draped around the box, and he partly fell as he struck the stage. Instantly springing to his feet with the suppleness of an athlete, he faced the audience for a moment, brandishing his dagger, shouted, "Sic Semper Tyrannis," and walked rapidly off the stage to the rear exit.

A piercing shriek from the President's box, a repeated call for "Water! water!" and "A surgeon!" in quick succession, conveyed the truth to the almost paralyzed audience. A most terrible scene of excitement followed. With loud shouts of "Kill him!" "Lynch him!" part of the audience stamped toward the entrance and some to the stage.

I leaped from the top of the orchestra railing in front of me upon the stage, and, announcing myself as an Army surgeon, was immediately lifted up to the President's box by several gentlemen who had collected beneath. I happened to be in uniform, having passed the entire day in attending to my duties at the Signal Camp of Instruction in Georgetown, and not having had an opportunity to change my dress. When I entered the box the President was lying on the floor, surrounded by his wailing wife and several gentlemen who had entered from the private stairway and dress circle. Assistant Surgeon Charles A. Leale, U. S. N., was in the box, and had caused the coat and waistcoat to be cut off in searching for the wound. The carriage had been ordered, to remove the President to the White House, but the surgeons countermanded the order, and he was removed to a bed in a house opposite the theatre. The wound in the head had been found before leaving the box, but at that time there was no blood oozing from it.

When the dying President was laid upon the bed, in a small but neatly furnished room opposite the theatre, it was found necessary to arrange his great length diagonally upon it. The room having become speedily filled to suffocation, the officer in command of the provost guard at the theatre was directed to clear it of all except the surgeons. This officer guarded the door until relieved, later in the evening, by General M. C. Meigs, who took charge of it the rest of the night, by direction of Mr. Stanton.

BRANDY PLACED IN PRESIDENT'S MOUTH

The wound was then examined. A tablespoonful of diluted brandy was placed between the President's lips, but it was swallowed with much difficulty. The respiration now became labored; pulse, 44; feeble; the left pupil much contracted, the right widely dilated; total insensibility to light in both. Mr. Lincoln was divested of all clothing, and mustard plasters were placed on every inch of the anterior surface of the body, from the neck to the toes. At this time the President's eyes were closed, and the lids and surrounding parts so injected with blood as to present the appearance of having been bruised. He was totally unconscious, and was breathing regularly but heavily, an occasional sigh escaping with the breath. There was scarcely a dry eye in the room, and it was the saddest and most pathetic deathbed scene I ever witnessed. Captain Robert Lincoln, of General Grant's staff, entered the room and stood at the headboard, leaning over his dying father. At first his terrible grief overpowered him, but soon recovering himself he leaned his head on the shoulder of Senator Charles Sumner, and remained in silent grief during the long, terrible night.

About twenty-five minutes after the President was laid upon the bed Surgeon-General Barnes and Dr. Robert King Stowe, the family physician, arrived and took charge of the case. It was owing to Dr. Leale's quick judgment in instantly placing the almost moribund President in a recumbent position the moment he saw him in the box that Mr. Lincoln did not expire in the theatre within ten minutes from fatal syncope. At Dr. Stowe's suggestion I placed another teaspoonful of diluted brandy between the President's lips, to determine whether it could be swallowed; but, as it was not, no further attempt was made.

Some difference of opinion existed as to the exact position of the ball, but the autopsy confirmed the correctness of the diagnosis upon first exploration. No further attempt was made to explore the wound. The injury was pronounced mortal. After the cessation of the bleeding the respiration was stertorous up to the last breath, which was drawn at 21 minutes and 55 seconds past 7 o'clock; the heart did not cease to beat until 22 minutes and 10 seconds after 7 o'clock. My hand was upon the President's heart, and my eye on the watch of the Surgeon-General, who was standing by my side.

with his finger upon the carotid. The respiration during the last thirty minutes was characterized by occasional intermissions, no respiration being made for nearly a minute, but by a convulsive effort air would gain admission to the lungs; when regular, though stertorous, respiration would go on for some seconds, followed by another period of perfect repose.

CABINET MEMBERS AROUND THE BED.

The Cabinet Ministers and others were surrounding the deathbed, watching with suspended breath the last feeble inspiration; and as the unbroken quiet would seem to prove that life had fled they would turn their eyes to their watches; then, as the struggling life within would force another fluttering respiration, they

would heave deep sighs of relief, and fix their eyes once more upon the face of their chief.

The vitality exhibited by Mr. Lincoln was remarkable. It was the opinion of the surgeons in attendance that most patients would have died within two hours from the reception of such an injury; yet Mr. Lincoln lingered from 10:30 p. m. until 7:22 a. m.

Mrs. Lincoln and a few other ladies and the Rev. Dr. Gurley, Mrs. Lincoln's pastor, remained during the night in the front parlor of the house, occasionally visiting her dying husband. Whenever she sat down at the bedside, clean napkins were laid over the crimson stains on the pillow. Her last visit was most painful. As she entered the chamber and saw how the beloved features were distorted, she fell fainting to the floor. Restoratives were applied, and she was supported to the bedside, where she frantically addressed the dying man.

"Love," she exclaimed, "live but for one moment to speak to me once—to speak to our children."

On one of her visits she looked up into my face as I stood leaning over the head of the bed, and said in most piteous tones: "Oh, shoot me, doctor, why don't you shoot me, too? I cannot live. I begged him not to go."

When it was announced that the great heart had ceased to beat, Mr. Stanton said in solemn tones:

"He now belongs to the ages."

Shortly after death, finding that the eyes were not entirely closed, one of the young surgeons reverently placed silver half dollars upon them. Secretary Stanton pulled down the window shades, a guard was stationed outside the door, and the martyred President was left alone. As we passed the partly open door of the parlor Dr. Gurley's voice could be heard raised in prayer, and Mrs. Lincoln's moans were pitiful to hear.

MULTITUDE STOOD IN THE RAIN.

Outside the drizzling rain was falling upon the heads of a multitude that were packed from Pennsylvania-ave. as far as the eye could see. Shortly after, Mrs. Lincoln, supported by her son Robert, entered her carriage and was driven to the White House. At 9 o'clock five surgeons, of whom I was one, met at the White House to perform an autopsy. It was found that the ball, a Derringer, had been remoulded, thus making it brittle. It had split into two pieces in its progress through the brain, one piece lodging half way in its track through the brain, and the other just behind the right eye.

The orbital plate of the right eye was shattered into numberless fragments, although not touched by the bullet.

During the autopsy Mrs. Lincoln sent for a lock of the President's hair. The piece was cut for her immediately around the fatal wound, wet with his blood; I also received a lock, as did others.

It is not generally known that the last official act of Mr. Lincoln's life was to sign the pardon of a rebel spy. The pardon was signed just before the President left the White House to go to the theatre.

In telling of how he became acquainted with Lincoln and learned to love him, Dr. Taft gives some interesting anecdotes. The churches of Washington, as most people will remember, were turned into hospitals after the battle of Bull Run, the hospitals being inadequate. Dr. Taft was the medical officer on the staff of General Augur, military commandant of the District of Columbia, and when the old Episcopal Church of the Ascension, in H-st., close to the White House, was improvised as a hospital, he was

made surgeon in charge.

The President was greatly harassed by affairs of state, and the troubles of countless individuals were being brought to him at that time. Still, he found time to visit the hospitals. Dr. Taft says, and had always a word of hearty cheer for the poor fellows lying disabled. They invariably felt better after his visits.

Mrs. Lincoln generally accompanied him and brought wine and flowers, which she distributed personally among the convalescents. Whenever he found a big fellow convalescent the President would insist, in his hearty, good humored way, on measuring height with him. Back to back they would stand and knock heads together, the President of the United States and the private in the Regular Army. Lincoln never found a man in the hospital as tall as he was. His height was six feet four inches.

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ETIN-PHILADELPHIA, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1934

SURGEON RELATES LINCOLN'S DEATH

Notebook of Dr. Charles Taft,
Witness of Assassination, Ac-
quired by Dr. Rosenbach

WRITER AT DEATHBED

Dr. Charles Taft, who was present that fateful night in Ford's Theatre in Washington when President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated detailed in his notebook the shooting and the subsequent death of the martyred President in the house across the street.

Recently the notebook came into the possession of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, Philadelphia bibliophile.

In part the account reads:

"Notes of the circumstances attending the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, on the evening of April 14, 1865, as witnessed by me; also the medical notes of my attendance on the President up to the time of his death, and of the post-mortem examination five hours after death....

"At about 10.30 my attention was directed toward the President's box by the report of a pistol, and I saw a man jump from the stage box, shouting as he did so: 'Sic semper tyrannis!' As he struck the stage he partly fell, sinking down until his knees touched the floor....a few moments of great confusion then followed....I heard several shouts for a surgeon; this was the first intimation I had that anyone had been wounded; I sprang upon the stage, calling out that I was a surgeon, when I was seized by several men and lifted up to the stage box; when I entered the President was lying upon the floor, surrounded by a number of men, who were lifting him to remove him...."

Dr. Taft described in detail the removal of the President to the nearby house, and the attempts made to save his life. He then continues:

"The wound ceased to bleed or discharge about 5.30 A. M. and from that time on the breathing was sterterous but gradually increased in frequency and decreased in strength up to the last breath which was drawn at 21 minutes and 55 seconds after 7; the heart did not cease to beat until 22 minutes, 10 seconds past 7; my hand was upon the President's heart and my eye upon the watch of the Surgeon General, who was standing by my side."

THE HUMANITY OF LINCOLN

Executive Mansion
Washington, Nov 21, 1864

To Mrs. Bixby, Boston, Mass.
Dear Madam.

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,
A. Lincoln.

A reproduction of the letter which Lincoln sent to Mrs. Bixby, of Boston, who had lost five sons in the war. Not only is it universally quoted in schools as an example of the humanity of a President who in the midst of national affairs found time to console a grieving mother but as another example of Lincoln's masterful command of the English language and ability to express noble thoughts in short words.

Surgeon's Diary Tells How Lincoln Was Shot to Death 69 Years Ago

Philadelphia, April 14. (AP) — Sixty-nine years ago tonight Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in Ford's theatre, Washington. Among those in the audience was Dr. Charles Taft, who attended the martyred president until death, and his diary tells anew the story of that fateful night.

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"I heard several shouts for a surgeon; this was the first intimation I had that anyone had been wounded. I sprang upon the stage,

calling out that I was a surgeon, when I was seized by several men and lifted up to the stage box. When I entered, the president was lying on the floor, surrounded by a number of men who were trying to remove him."

Dr. Taft recounts in detail how the president was carried across the street to a private residence and how doctors sought to save his life.

"The wound ceased to bleed or discharge at about 5:30 a. m." he continues in his diary, "and from that time on the breathing was sterterious, but gradually increased in frequency and decreased in strength up to the last breath which was drawn at 21 minutes and 5 seconds after 7; the heart did not cease to beat until 22 minutes, 10 seconds past 7.

"My hand was upon the president's heart and my eye upon the watch of the surgeon general, who was standing by my side."

H-14-34

THE NEWS-SENTINEL, FORT WAYNE, INDIANA.

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May 15

1934

THE

DEATH OF LINCOLN DEPICTED IN DIARY

Doctor Who Attended Him Set
Down Struggle to Save Ebbing
Life 69 Years Ago Today.

ALL EFFORTS UNAVAILING

Dr. C. S. Taft, in Audience When
President Was Shot, Refused
to Let Him Be Carried Home.

The hopeless struggle to save the life of Abraham Lincoln from the time he was shot until his death, sixty-nine years ago today, is tersely described in the diary of Dr. Charles S. Taft, now part of the collection of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach.

On its yellowing pages Dr. Taft, who was first to respond to the call for a doctor after President Lincoln had been shot, told how he advised against taking the President home, insisting instead that he be carried to the nearest house.

Dr. Taft in Theatre.

Dr. Taft had been seated in the orchestra of the Ford Theatre in Washington, watching the performance of "Our American Cousin." The President's party was in the State box above. He recorded his first intimation of trouble as follows:

"At about 10:30 my attention was directed toward the President's box, by the report of a pistol and I saw a man (John Wilkes Booth) drop from the State box, shouting as he did so 'Sic semper tyrannis'; as he struck the stage he partly fell, sinking down until his knees touched the floor.

"A few moments of great confusion then followed. I heard several shouts for a surgeon; this was the first intimation I had that anyone had been wounded, I sprang upon the stage, calling out that I was a surgeon, when I was seized by several men and lifted up to the State box; when I entered, the President was lying upon the floor, surrounded by a number of men, who were about lifting him to remove him."

Under Dr. Taft's instruction, Mr. Lincoln was carried to the bedroom of a house opposite the theatre. Efforts to ease his pain by feeding him teaspoonsful of diluted brandy were abandoned because of the difficulty he experienced in swallowing, according to the diary.

The President's Death.

Attempts at medical ministration and probing the wound also had to be abandoned, Dr. Taft wrote, because of the pain which they caused. The vigil of the last two hours was described by Dr. Taft as follows:

"The wound ceased to bleed or discharge about 5:30 A. M., and from that time the breathing was stertorous but gradually increased in frequency and decreased in strength up to the last breath which was drawn at 21 minutes and 55 seconds after 7; the heart did not cease to beat until 22 minutes 10 seconds past 7; my hand was upon the President's heart and my eye upon the watch of the Surgeon General who was standing by my side."

The diary, its green morocco case turned black with the years, is kept in the vaults of the Rosenbach Library, 15 East Fifty-first Street.

[1934]

DIARY DESCRIBES THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

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164 TAFT, DR. CHARLES

NOTE BOOK KEPT BY DR. TAFT IN 1865.

Surgeon Taft's account of the events in Ford's Theater and at Lincoln's deathbed!
"Notes of the circumstances attending the assassination of Abraham

the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, on the evening of April 14, 1865, as witnessed by me; also the medical notes of my attendance on the President up to the time of his death, and of the Post-Mortem examination five hours after death"—"The heart did not cease to beat until 22' 10" past 7; my hand was upon the President's heart and my eye upon the watch of the Surgeon General who was standing by my side." 12mo, leather. \$12,000

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OLD DIARY DESCRIBES MURDER OF LINCOLN

Attending Doctor's Notebook bares
Details of Assassination 68 years ago tonight.

Philadelphia, April 14 -- Sixty-nine years ago
tonight Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in
Ford's theater, Washington.

Among those in the audience was Dr. Charles
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Dr. Taft recounts in detail how the Presi-
dent was carried across the street to a private

residence and how doctors sought to save his life.

"The wound ceased to bleed or discharge at about 5:30 A. M.," he continues in his diary, "and from that time on the breathing was stertorous, but gradually increased in frequency and decreased in strength up to the last breath which was drawn at 21 minutes and 5 seconds past 7.

"My hand was upon the President's heart and my eye upon the watch of the surgeon general, who was standing by my side."

Doctor's Notes on Lincoln's Death Treasured by East Orange Official

An account of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the medical attention given him afterward is a valued possession of City Electrician William H. Jordan of East Orange. The account is a copy of the original notes of Dr. Charles S. Taft, acting assistant surgeon, U. S. A., who attended the former President.

Jordan's father, the late Joshua H. Jordan, a dealer in etchings and rare prints, obtained the original for a client. His mother, the late Dr. Isabella W. Jordan, a physician, made a copy of it which the electrician now has.

Because of the detailed surgical information in the notes, of interest for comparison with modern methods, Jordan has had additional copies made and has sent them to several physicians in the Oranges.

Dr. Taft, who penned the notes the day after Lincoln's assassination in Ford's Theater, April 14, 1865, was at the theater that night and saw the President arrive and enter his box.

Taft from his location was unable to see the President after he was seated although he mentions seeing Mrs. Lincoln and a Miss Clara Harris.

"*Sic Semper Tyrannis.*"

The doctor then relates:

"At about 10:30 P. M. my attention was directed toward the President's box by the report of a pistol and I saw a man drop from the state box shouting as he did so '*Sic Semper Tyrannis.*' As he struck the stage he partly fell, sinking down until his knee nearly touched the floor. He sprang to an erect position in an instant, brandished a large knife in his right hand for about three seconds, then darted across the stage with the knife above his head and disappeared.

"A few moments of great confusion then followed, many persons jumping upon the stage and some passing out in the direction the man had taken. I was endeavoring to pacify my wife who wished to leave the place when I heard several shouts for a surgeon. This was the first intimation I had that any one had been wounded.

"I sprang upon the stage, calling out that I was a surgeon when I was seized by several men and lifted up to the state box. When I entered the President was lying upon the floor, surrounded by a number of men."

Dr. Taft then tells how Lincoln was carried to a nearby house where he gave the President some brandy.

"I remained with the President until he died, engaged during the greater part of the night in supporting his head so that the wound should not press upon the pillow and the flow of blood be obstructed. I was relieved at intervals by Colonel Crane, Surgeon General, U. S. A. About 2 A. M. an ordinary silver probe was introduced into the wound by the surgeon general."

This probe was too short and a longer one was sent for which was passed into the track of the wound a distance of $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Dr. Taft continues:

"No further effort was made to explore the wound. All the surgical aid that could be rendered consisted in keeping the external orifice free from coagulum and promoting the discharge of blood and brain tissue. While the discharge kept up the breathing of the patient was quiet and easy but the moment the wound was closed from any cause the breathing became at once labored and stertorous."

"The pulse of the President fluctuated between 40 and 60 during the night and varied in volume and force. After 5 A. M. the pulse remained at about 60 but became gradually weaker and thinning.

"The wound ceased to bleed or discharge about 5:30 A. M. and from that time the breathing was stertorous but gradually increased in frequency and decreased in strength up to the last breath which was drawn at 21 minutes and 55 seconds after 7. The heart did not cease to beat until 22 minutes and 10 seconds past 7. My hand was upon the President's heart and my eye upon the watch of the surgeon general who was by my side."

Dr. Taft lastly describes the autopsy five hours after Lincoln's death. The ball from the pistol, a fragment of bone removed during the examination and the probe used to determine the length of the wound were delivered to Secretary of War Stanton who placed them in an envelope and sealed them with his private seal.

Story of Lincoln's Death by Surgeon Is Exhibited

*Eye-witness Account of Surgeon Is Put on
Display at Rosenbach's*

An eye-witness account of the shooting of Abraham Lincoln 72 years ago today, and of his death nine hours later, penned that same day by a surgeon who cared for him on his death-bed, is one of the outstanding items of an exhibition of Lincoln documents on display at Rosenbach's, 1320 Walnut st., from today until next Tuesday.

This description of the assassination, of the flight of the murderer, John Wilkes Booth, from the President's box at Ford's Theatre in Washington, across the stage, and of the stertorous breathing of Lincoln from the moment the wound in his head ceased to bleed until his death, two hours later, is a document never

yet published. It was written April 15, 1865, by Dr. C. S. Taft, then acting assistant surgeon in the army. From 3000 items, valued at \$1,000.-000, in his collection of documents dealing with the last year and a half of Lincoln's life and of the Civil War, Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach has selected varied treasures for this exhibition.

Among these are the program Lincoln used at Ford's Theatre—stained with his blood; the draft, in Grant's writing, of his telegram to Secretary of War Stanton announcing the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, and a four-page letter, in General Lee's handwriting, in which he wrote to General Joseph E. Johnston of his desperate situation in his last confrontation of Grant.

PHILADELPHIA

4-14-37

-Inquire

Doctor's Story of Lincoln's Death

Notebook of Surgeon Who Was Witness Throws New Light on Tragic Night.

By ROBERT REISS

"...the heart did not cease to beat until 22' 10" past 7", wrote Dr. Charles S. Taft, U. S. Army surgeon, in a small, leather-covered notebook apparently bought for the single purpose of recording the precise events surrounding the martyrdom of Abraham Lincoln just 75 years ago tonight.

The brief, meticulously written report of the tragic occasion and the doctor's post-mortem never was published in full until today. It is on exhibition in the gallery of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, noted bibliophile and art dealer, at 1320 Walnut st., with other historic documents touching upon the assassination.

The Call for a Surgeon.

None other, however, has the poignancy of the physician's description of his visit to Ford's Theater with his wife, the report of a pistol, the confusion, his endeavor "to pacify my wife, who wished to leave the place"—and then the cry for a surgeon, bringing with it a chain of events in which Dr. Taft was a principal participant.

The medical terminology of the report, the strict factualness, serve only to emphasize rather than to detract from the drama of the occasion. Whether by artistic design or not, the post-mortem is followed—as if it were an afterthought that somehow summed up the national tragedy—by this succinct remembrance of the scene:

"President's body servt. sitting in corner near President's head weeping with hadkf. to face."

Deathbed Scene.

Preceding that, Dr. Taft has two more little notes, one reporting the names of "the leading men of the profession" who tendered their medical services, and this recollection of the deathbed scene:

"Dr. King sitting at foot of bed in rocking chair with arm leaning on bedrail, looking around from behind Dr. Stone."

Dr. Taft's Report.

Dr. Taft's report of the assassi-

the surgical aid that could be rendered consisted in keeping the external surface of the wound free from coagula and promoting the discharge of black and brown tissue; while the discharge kept up the ball of the patient was quiet and so quiet that the noise of the numerous closed doors in cause the breathing became silent like a and stillness; the pulse of the President fluctuated between 40 and 60 during the night and varied in volume and force, sometimes being full and strong and then thready like and full, after seven the pulse remained at about 60.

Became gradually milder and thinner from that time until his death. The wound ceased to bleed or discharge about 1:30 AM and from that time the breathing was distinct, but gradually increased in frequency and increased in strength up to the last breath which was taken at 20 minutes and 55 seconds after 7; the heart did not cease to beat until 22' 10" past 7; my hand was open the President's chest and my eye upon the mouth of the Surgeon General who was standing by my side. Frist he spoke on the curtain,

A page from Dr. Charles S. Taft's meticulous account of the martyred President's assassination is shown above. The book, with other Lincoln documents, is displayed by Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach on the 75th anniversary of the Booth attack.

box, which intercepted the view of his face from my seat.

The Assassination.

"At about 10:30 P. M. my attention was directed toward the President's box by the report of a pistol and I saw a man drop from the State box, shouting as he did so, "Sic semper tyrannis"; as he struck the stage he partly fell, sinking down until his knees nearly touched the floor; he sprang to an erect posture in an instant, brandished a large knife which he held in his right hand for about the space of three seconds, then darted across the stage with the knife held above his head and disappeared; a few moments of great confusion then followed, many persons jumping upon the stage, and some passing out in the direction the man who had leaped from the State box had taken. I was endeavoring to pacify my wife, who wished to leave the place, when I heard several shouts for a surgeon; this was the first intimation I had that anyone had been wounded; I sprang upon the stage, calling out that I was a surgeon,

eral, U. S. A. About 2 A. M. an ordinary silver probe was introduced into the wound by the Surgeon General. It met an obstruction about two inches from the external wound which was decided to be the plug of bone forced in from the skull and lodged in the track of the ball. The probe passed by this obstruction, but was too short to follow the track of the ball the whole length of the wound. I suggested to the Surgeon General and Dr. Stone that I could send for a longer probe which they requested me to do, and I dispatched Hospital Steward _____, of Lincoln Hospital, to Judiciary Square Hospital for a relation probe; when it arrived it was passed into the track of the wound a distance of seven and a quarter inches (which I ascertained by exact measurement afterward).

Last Hours.

"The point struck the orbital plate of the right orbit as indicated by the ragged surface, and the absence of the lead mark upon the porcelain point of the

sistant Surgeon Curtis, U. S. A.; Assistant Surgeon Notson, U. S. A.; and myself. The calvarium was removed, the brain exposed, and sliced down to the track of the ball which was plainly indicated by a line of coagulated blood extending from the external wound in the occipital bone obliquely across from left to right through the brain to the anterior lobe of the cerebrum immediately behind the right eye; after removing the brain from the cranium the ball dropped from its lodgement in the anterior lobe; a small piece of the ball evidently cut off in its passage through the bones of the cranium was previously taken out of the track of the ball about four inches from the external wound. The orbital plates of both eyes were fractured. The surgeon general decided that the fracture of both orbital plates was due to the internal pressure from the orbits, the fractured pieces having been forced inwards towards the brain; Dr. Stone, however, gave a different theory of their fracture, saying that it was due to contre coups. The lat-

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Lincoln death account to be sold

SPRINGFIELD, III. (AP) — A doctor's first-hand account of Abraham Lincoln's death — from the gunshot at Ford's Theatre to the results of the post-mortem examination — is going on the auction block in New York next week.

The quill-pen manuscript of nine and a half pages was found in the papers of a deceased collector. It was written by Army surgeon Charles Sabin Taft, who was in the theater when Lincoln was shot and was at the president's bedside when he died.

The account describes how the distraught Mary Todd Lincoln fainted and, once revived, called her dying husband "Love" and begged him to speak from what became his deathbed.

Lincoln scholar Tom Schwartz of the Illinois Historic Library says the manuscript contains no new revelations, but he says it is an important find.

The account re-creates details of the April 14, 1865, shooting: Lin-



Lincoln: Details for sale

from Lincoln's brain.

When Lincoln's wife sat by her dying husband, "clean napkins were laid over the crimson stains on the pillow where the brain tissue and life blood ... was oozing away," according to an excerpt.

"Her last visit was most painful . . .," the manuscript says. "(When she) saw how the beloved features were distorted, she fell fainting to the floor.

"Restoratives were applied and she frantically addressed the dying

coln's entrance to the theater, the pistol shot, Lincoln's wife's wailing, the president's last hours and Taft's visit to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton with bullet and bone fragments taken

man, 'Love,' she exclaimed, "live but for one moment to speak to me once — to speak to our children!"

Young surgeons placed silver half-dollars over Lincoln's eyes shortly after he died because his eyes were not entirely closed, according to the account.

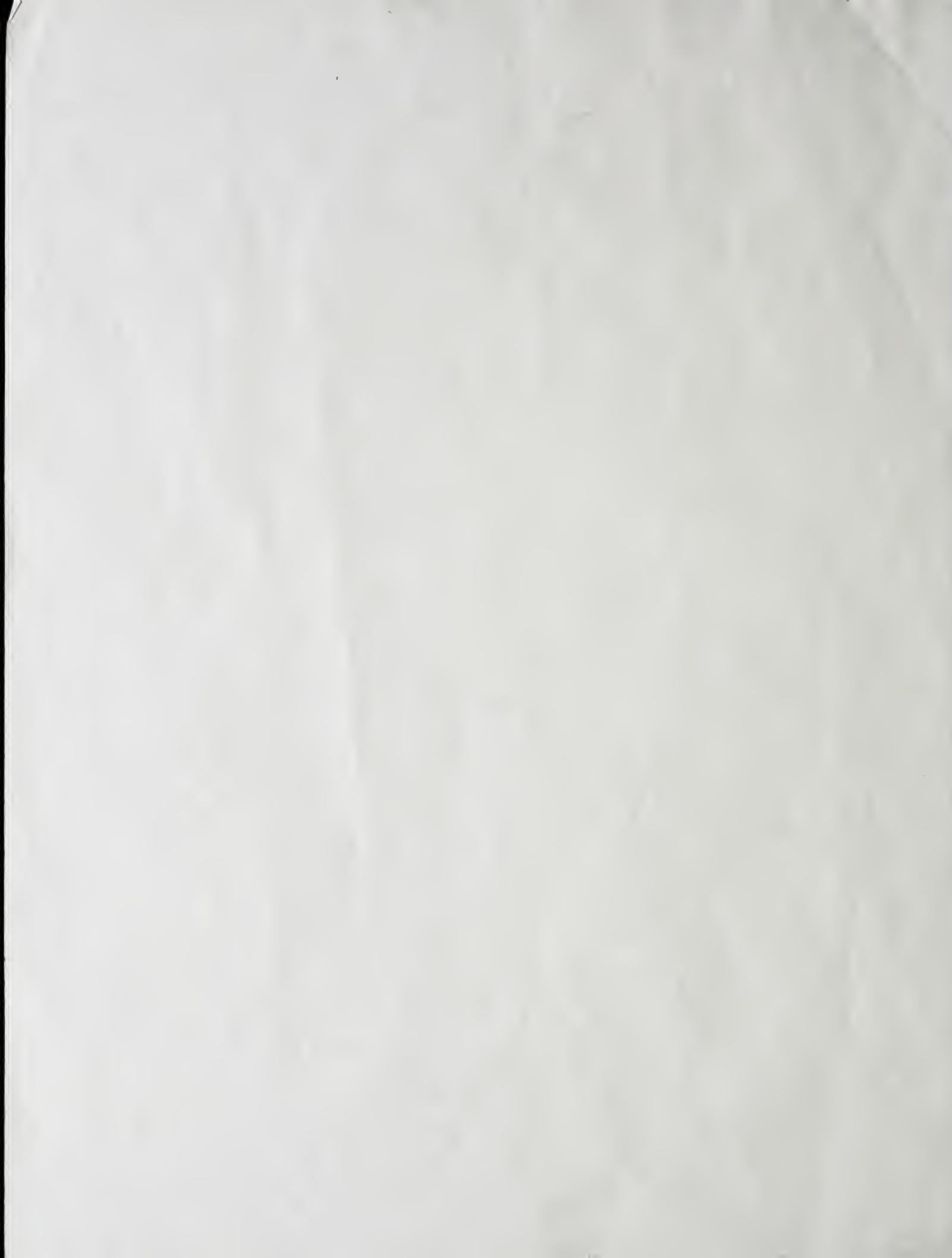
James Waechter, who represents the New York firm of R.M. Smythe, which has the manuscript, said the document was found last summer among the papers of the late Wil Roberts.

R.M. Smythe has valued the manuscript at \$35,000.

It is written on grayish-colored bond paper with a quill pen in brown ink — typical of the 1865 period.

Taft first published his description of the "Last Hours of Abraham Lincoln" a week after Lincoln died. Experts believe Taft wrote the account under Stanton's direction.

Taft was the second doctor at Lincoln's side after he was shot and stayed with him through his death.



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